




Speech By
Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe

MEMBER FOR SANDGATE

Record of Proceedings, 2 April 2019

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Local Government, Voting

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (9.59 am): Yesterday I provided Queensland's 564 local government mayors and councillors with an update on our local council reforms. The Palaszczuk government already has a strong record when it comes to delivering increased transparency and accountability in local government informed by the CCC's Operation Belcarra report. At the start of March, I announced a suite of proposed local government reforms for consultation. We have consulted and we have listened. The stakeholders have made it clear that there needs to be further consultation on some of the proposed reforms, and we have agreed to more discussions on these aspects.

We are moving forward with the introduction of compulsory preferential voting for mayoral and divisional councillor elections, starting from the 2020 local government election. This will align local government voting methodologies with state and federal elections. Feedback received on proportional representation demonstrated this change involved complexities such that its introduction was not recommended for the 2020 local government. As a consequence, further consultation will be undertaken on PR with the aim of introducing partial proportional representation for undivided councils at the 2024 local government election. Let me be clear—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: Look it up. You will understand it then.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The minister's comments will come through the chair.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition!

Mr HINCHLIFFE: Let me be clear, as a key recommendation of Belcarra we will implement expenditure caps for councillors and candidates and public funding for elections. However, in consultation with councils, we accept that getting the detail of these reforms right in order for them to be effective for the 2020 election would be difficult. The government will legislate to have them in place for the day after the 28 March 2020 election so that councillors and future candidates can have clarity for an entire term. Further consultation will be undertaken on expenditure caps to ensure the dollar amounts are reasonable.

The stage 2 Belcarra reforms also include real-time disclosure of electoral spending, further tightening of conflict of interest and material personal interest provisions, definition of a group of candidates, mandatory training for candidates and councillors, dedicated campaign bank accounts and prohibiting the use of credit cards for campaign expenses, tightening of reporting of gifts and changes to mayoral powers. These are sensible reforms that seek a more transparent and accountable local government sector, as recommended by the Belcarra report.